

Summary of DVD And summary of Growing New Roots: Reflections of Immigrant Teenagers in Canada

Growing New Roots: The Voices of Immigrant Teenagers in Canada paints a compassionate picture of the thoughts of some ESL secondary school students as they travel on their immigrant journey. Based on the collaborative work of an ESL Drama club and an ESL Drama class that seeks to create an on-going public awareness of the immigrant experience and to empower immigrant students, this video presents the students' answers to **five main questions**:

- Before coming to Canada, what did you imagine that Canada would be like?
- When you left your country, what did you feel?
- What has your experience been like since you have been here?
- What has made you happy? What has been difficult?
- For each “Negative” experience, what can **you** do to help yourself? What can **your teachers or the school** do to help you?

In their answers to these five questions, we see common themes emerge.

- Prior to their arrival, many immigrant students imagined Canada to be a cold country, but a place with friendly, just, and peaceful people.
- Challenges Faced:
 - However, regardless of this positive image, their departure from their countries of origin, as they said farewell to friends and family, has still caused them severe pain: “I felt devastated.”
 - Upon arrival, one positive key message is clear: students overwhelmingly value their teachers and the education system; nevertheless, the immigrant teenagers are still faced with many challenges such as
 - finding a support network of friends,
 - coping with isolation,
 - handling language barriers,
 - living in a multicultural society,
 - managing a faster pace of life,
 - balancing employment and school, and
 - dealing with climate change.
- Strategies Adopted:
 - To help them endure these challenges, they highlight the strong need for students to
 - communicate with their teachers and guidance counsellors,

- get involved in the school community, and
 - take responsibility for their own language learning by engaging in communicative activities.
- Suggestions for Teachers:
 - Finally, they underscore that their schools and teachers can play a key role in helping them to adjust to their new home through a variety of ways:
 - establish an ambassadors' club that welcomes newcomers;
 - know the students' lives "inside and outside of the classroom;"
 - create clubs which support their first language culture;
 - provide learning strategies for group work and oral presentations;
 - design assignments which can use their prior knowledge from the first language culture;
 - give samples and structural frameworks to ease adjustment to new writing genres;
 - show flexibility with deadlines;
 - provide extra time;
 - give one-on-one attention;
 - use assessment and evaluation strategies that do not have a language focus;
 - offer a wide selection of ESL courses;
 - overall, be patient and understanding because "they are trying their best."

Questions to consider before viewing:

1. What contexts are conducive to language learning and supporting students' individual voices?
2. What do you understand about...
 - the experiences of immigrant teenagers?
 - the achievements?
 - the challenges?

Questions to consider after viewing:

1. How can educators create a learning environment that...
 - offers authentic language experiences?
 - allows students to see themselves beyond the classroom in different roles?

- helps students to feel that they are part of bigger goal or cause?
2. What do newcomer students celebrate about their immigration?
 3. How can educators empower newcomer adolescent students to meet their academic and social challenges?
 4. What resources are available for educators to help support newcomer adolescents?